United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's Personal Representative for Afghanistan says chances for political settlement to 13-year old conflict in that country "are looking better than ever".

◆ Secretary-General says he will soon present to Security Council operational plan for United Nations monitored elections in Angola; agreement on technical assistance has already been signed with that Government.

◆ On official visit to Colombia, Secretary-General meets in Santa Fe de Bogota with Colombian President, Foreign Minister and his Personal Representative for Central American for talks on situation in El Salvador, Central America, Cambodia and Yugoslavia.

◆ Also in Colombia, Secretary-General addresses opening meeting of eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Cartagena, declaring that there could be no peace and security without development and no development without peace and security. The United Nations must help Governments what were in the process of democratization, a process which preceded development.

◆ Secretary-General receives confirmation from both parties to Somali conflict that each will send three-men delegations to represent them at talks to be held in New York this week on situation in Somalia.

◆ United States suspends cooperation with United Nations Special Committee on decolonization due to "outmoded, irrelevant and repetitive rhetoric" in its work.

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The chances for a political settlement to the 13-year old conflict in Afghanistan "are looking brighter than ever", according to Benon Sevan, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mr. Sevan has just returned to Islamabad after an intensive round of consultations in Peshawar with a wide range of tribal leaders from all regions

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of Afghanistan, as well as with members of several opposition groups. On his return, Mr. Sevan expressed satisfaction with the meetings, which he termed "constructive and encouraging".

During his meetings with Afghan leaders, Mr. Sevan discussed, among other things, the proposal by the Secretary-General last month that a gathering of Afghans be convened in order to agree upon a transition period, as well as the transition mechanism, leading to the establishment of a broad-based government through free and fair elections. Such a gathering -- known as the Ijlas -- would involve the participation of about 150 Afghan representatives acceptable to all sides, and would be convened outside the region. Several groups and leaders said that they would soon be providing the United Nations with suggestions about who should participate in the Ijlas.

Mr. Sevan will be returning to Peshawar for more discussions within two weeks. He is expected to visit Kabul and Teheran during the coming week.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has informed the Security Council that he will present to it shortly an operational plan for United Nations monitored elections in Angola, together with a recommendation that the Council authorize the addition of this function to the mandate already entrusted to him in connection with the implementation of the Angolan Peace Accords.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali said in a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 6 February, that since Angola's request last December for United Nations assistance in preparing for elections, as well as for United Nations observers to follow the electoral procedure until it is completed, work had proceeded on plans for such assistance. An agreement on technical assistance had already been signed with the Government of Angola.

The letter also informed the Council of the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Margaret Joan Anstee as Special Representative for Angola to head the current and projected activities of the United Nations in connection with the Peace Accords and to be the Chief of the United Nations Verification Mission (UNAVEM II). Mr. Boutros-Ghali said he also expected to recommend to the Council that, in addition to the existing military observers and police monitors and the existing civilian staff, UNAVEM II should be enlarged to include an Electoral Division.

The elections in Angola are scheduled for September 1992.

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The Secretary-General, visiting Colombia this past weekend for the opening of the eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VIII) in Cartegena de Indias, was received with full Head of State honours. He was also awarded honorary citizenship of Santa Fe de Bogota and Cartegena de Indias.

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It was the Secretary-General's first official visit to a Member State since assuming office on January 1. In Santa Fe de Bogota on Saturday, he had a meeting with President Cesar Gaviria, attended also by Colombian Foreign Minister Noemi Sanin and the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Central American, Alvaro de Soto. They discussed a wide range of issues, including the situation of El Salvador and Central America, Cambodia and Yugoslavia, the difficulties of developing countries and their economic adjustment programmes. They also discussed expectations for UNCTAD VIII.

In Cartegena for the opening of UNCTAD VIII, Mr. Boutros-Ghali declared that there could be no peace and security without development and no development without peace and security. The United Nations must help Governments that were in the process of democratization, a process which preceded development.

UNCTAD VIII was taking place at an exceptional moment, he said. The disappearance of competing idealogies and zones of influence meant that all countries had the responsibility for promoting mutually advantageous economic and political cooperation. At the same time, those developments increased the risk of conflict, underscoring the vital need to rethink approaches for ensuring collective security and the maintenance of peace. The principles inherent in democratic systems and in the sound management of public affairs must not stop at national boundaries, they must also apply to the management of the world economy.

The Secretary-General proposed a triennial review of the global interrelation between political, economic and social problems and supported the convening of an international conference on finance and development. He said that by contributing to the rise of a new partnership for development, UNCTAD VIII could make a major contribution to an historical turning point in the twenty-first century.

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Spokesman François Giuliani told correspondents today that the Secretary-General had received written confirmation from both Somali leaders -- Interim President Ali Mahdi Mohammed and General Mohammed Farah Aideed -- that they would each be sending three-member delegations to represent them at talks to be held in New York this week on the situation in Somalia. The delegations were due to arrive either Tuesday or Wednesday.

The first phase of the discussions were scheduled to begin on Wednesday morning, the Spokesman said, with meetings between the Secretary-General and representatives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Talks with the Somali parties were due to begin either on Wednesday evening or Thursday.

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In related news, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher has expressed his country's readiness to provide two demilitarized mine-clearing tanks for use in northern Somalia. In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 3 February, he said that the offer was being made on the assumption that "this humanitarian measure does not conflict with the provisions of Security Council resolution 733 (1992)", which calls for a cease-fire in Mogadishu and an arms embargo against Somalia.

The President of the Security Council told the Secretary-General, in a letter of reply dated 5 February, that the Council had no objection to the German offer.
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The United States has suspended its cooperation with the United Nations Special Committee on decolonization.

In a letter to the President of the General Assembly, dated 4 February, United States Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering explained his country's decision, saying that the United States would not resume cooperation with the Committee until it "brings its work in line with the current focus and spirit of the United Nations". As the number of remaining non-self-governing territories diminished, it was increasingly important that the United Nations decolonization committees pay more attention to those territories' evolution towards self-government, he said.

He noted that, this year, the Special Committee had again forwarded to the General Assembly a number of resolutions which contained "outmoded, irrelevant and repetitive rhetoric". It had again taken up issues which, he said, were inappropriate for Special Committee consideration -- South Africa, apartheid, military activities in United States territories, Puerto Rico and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Ambassador Pickering urged members of the Special Committee to reform its work and to address as a matter of priority those issues of significance to the remaining territories.
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